

Michigan Schedules Gary Hearing on Improved Trackage, New NWI Stop

By Bill Malcolm

LANSING, MICHIGAN -- The Michigan DOT funded a consultant study on elimination of the congestion in Indiana going into Chicago in order to allow trains to reduce operating times on the train between Detroit and Chicago.

Alternatives studied included adding a possible passenger only rail line paralleling the Norfolk Southern line in northern Indiana (from Porter west towards Chicago).

Now a draft environmental impact statement (EIS), outlining the details and options in order to improve service on the route including trackage options between Porter (IN) and Chicago, has been released for comment. (From Porter east the route can go up to 109 m.p.h. but from Porter west, congestion slows the train so the average speed of the route is less than 50 m.p.h.)

An upgrade to the Michigan City (IN) station (adding a second platform) plus a possible new unspecified "suburban station" in Northwestern Indiana are also being considered.

(Currently the three Detroit to Chicago trains do not stop in this area. The EIS talks about additional runs for the train which actually starts in Pontiac and also serves the Detroit suburbs of Birmingham, Royal Oak, and Troy.)

The Michigan DOT is holding public comment hearing in Gary on the proposal (known as an environmental impact statement) on October 30 from 4 p.m. to 7 p.m. in the Genesis Convention Center (Lake Room).

Details on the plan's alternatives and details of the various alternatives are posted on the Michigan DOT's website, www.GreatLakesRail.org. Comments are due in December.

Michael Riley of INDOT's rail office confirmed MI DOT (not INDOT) is holding the Gary hearing -- although INDOT will be attending.

When asked if INDOT supported adding a new Indiana stop on the Chicago to Detroit route, Riley said: "Ridership and potential economic development are good for everyone." INDOT also issued a press release on the issue.

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Rail Study Commissioned to Look at Economic Impact of Hoosier State Rail Corridor

By Dennis Hodges

LAFAYETTE—The board of directors of the Indiana Passenger Rail Alliance (IPRA) has voted to engage Transportation Economics and Management Systems, Inc. of Frederick, Maryland (TEMS), to prepare a business plan and economic impact study of a rail corridor that runs from Chicago to Cincinnati and to Louisville, by way of Dyer, Rensselaer, Lafayette, Crawfordsville, Indianapolis and Connersville.

The proposed study will cost between \$150K and \$200K, and will determine capital costs and the revenue and operating expense of modern 21st Century passenger trains. The study will include projections of the economic impact on the state and the communities served by the trains. It will be completed in about four months, once the funding is secured. The study is a necessary prerequisite for an environmental impact study (EIS) of the corridor, and for securing federal funding for capital improvements.

As a result of the study, the Alliance will have a realistic estimate of the capital costs to be incurred by the infrastructure improvements, which in turn will support a 21st Century passenger rail operation in Indiana. Revenue and expense projections will also be used to predict the profitability of various combinations of speed and frequency of service. The end result will be a demonstration of the utility and economic viability of modern passenger rail across Indiana.

TEMS was chosen to compliment another passenger rail study it did in Indiana. The firm recently completed a feasibility study and business plan for the Northeast Indiana Passenger Rail Association (NIPRA) headquartered in Fort Wayne. The focus of that study was a corridor from Chicago to Fort Wayne and Columbus. This study has since paved the way for an application to the Federal Rail Administration (FRA), sponsored by the Indiana Department of Transportation (INDOT), for matching funds for that corridor's EIS.

This is a major undertaking for IPRA, which looks forward to presenting a document that will clearly demonstrate to the state of Indiana the usefulness of mod-

ern a 21st Century passenger rail development in the Chicago to Indianapolis and Cincinnati corridor, and also on to Louisville from Indianapolis.

The proposed service could then consist of several daily trains in each direction, and run up to 130mph. The service will also include modern travel amenities. IPRA believes that improved rail passenger service must be a part of Indiana's transportation vision. The airlines are moving away from short haul flights, and intercity highways are becoming increasingly congested. The addition of modern rail corridors would enhance the viability and reliability of the state's transportation system.

For further information, visit the Indiana Passenger Rail Alliance at www.indianahighspeedrail.org or email the Alliance at info@indianahighspeedrail.org.

History Society Train Heads for Terre Haute and Bargersville

By Amy Lamb, Indiana Historical Society

TERRE HAUTE AND BARGERSVILLE—Don't miss the Indiana Bicentennial Train this month. It stops in Terre Haute from October 2-4 and in Bargersville (south of Indianapolis) from October 9-11. Tour the train cars to learn about Indiana history.

The first two stops (Columbus and Jasper in September) were a huge success, enjoyed by thousands of adults and children. Relying heavily on IHS's extensive visual and archival collections, the onboard traveling exhibit *The Next Indiana* occupies three 65-foot renovated Amtrak freight cars. *(continued)*



The Indiana Bicentennial Train drew a crowd in Columbus. (Photo courtesy Indiana Historical Society)

("History Society Train" continued from page 2)

Temporary "depots" are set up at each location, where visitors can participate in hands-on and educational activities, catch a 1916 interpreter presentation, connect with the mission and offerings of IHS, and purchase items from a pop-up History Market.

Even though visitors only get a stationary look at the Indiana Bicentennial Train, its statewide tour requires the cooperative effort of several additional railroads, led by The Indiana Rail Road Company and supported by Norfolk Southern Corporation. The Bicentennial Train and its accompanying activities are all free and open to the public, operating 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. on Thursday and Friday, and 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Saturday.

For more information, to volunteer or to schedule a group visit for the Indiana Bicentennial Train, call (317) 232-1882 or visit www.indianahistory.org/train.

Amtrak Veterans' Job Fair in Beech Grove Matches Vets with Rail Employers

By Bill Malcolm

BEECH GROVE -- Want a job at CSX? They have 100 openings which they discussed with veterans and their spouses at the September 18 Hiring Our Heroes veterans' job fair held by Amtrak at their Beech Grove facility.

Over 15 employers (mostly in the rail-related fields) met with over 100 veterans (and their spouses). Amtrak Beech Grove employees also presented a check for \$620 which they raised to the Wounded Warrior Project which provides financial assistance to wounded veterans and their families. Amtrak Beech Grove plant manager Robert Moriarty said the event was a great opportunity to recognize the nation's veterans and help them to gain meaningful employment. Amtrak's Lowell Baker noted that 25% of new hires at Amtrak are veterans. Barbara Wu of Amtrak (see picture) also recruited veterans for Amtrak openings around the system (see picture talking to job seeker Charles Brown). State Representative Cindy Kirchofer, who was present for the event, said that she is a big proponent of mass transit.

Participating companies included Amtrak, ADM, CSX, Indiana Rail Road, Indiana State Police, Kelly/FedEx, La



Amtrak's Barbara Wu talks with job seeker Charles Brown at the Veterans' Job Fair.

Quinta Inns, Norfolk Southern and others. CSX's Steve Toomey said the company had over 100 openings. Norfolk Southern's Shawnba Mahaffey said the company was recruiting for jobs in its 22 state system. GE provided job seekers with a training class during the event including transition skills for veterans, according to Chris Urbauer of GE's Chicago office.

Rail Forum Details Rail Value

INDIANAPOLIS -- The Indiana Passenger Rail Alliance and the Hoosier Environmental Council co-sponsored an Indianapolis Forum on Passenger Rail on August 29. Over 40 people attended. While the presentations focused mainly on the Chicago-Indianapolis Corridor, other operations were also discussed. Tim Maloney of the Hoosier Environmental Council provided an overview of the importance of railroad service in Indiana. He saw passenger rail growing because an estimated 42% of the State's residents live within 25 miles of one of the Hoosier State's current stops.

State Representative Christina Hale (D-87th District) noted that whereas America was once a world leader in terms of providing public transportation, we no longer are. (She also bemoaned the lack of attendance of millennials in the audience, saying that they needed to be informed and engaged in supporting rail.) State Senator Jim Merritt (R-31st District) is a professional railroader himself (Indiana Railroad Company, VP for Corporate Affairs); Merritt praised the Indiana Department of Transportation for its work in seeking to develop and improve The Hoosier State.

Use a Dome Car for the Cardinal, IPRA Urges

By Steve Coxhead

HAMMOND -- Several years ago, a plan was developed to resume daily service to Southern Ohio, Northern Kentucky, Southern West Virginia, and Western Virginia, via central Indiana. As a part of this plan, it was recommended that Amtrak maximize the scenic attractions of this route by running a dome car on selected runs of Train # 50 and 51, the Cardinal. After following this plan for several years, it was cancelled without notice last fall.

Corridor Capital Outlines Hoosier State Plans

By Donald Yehle

INDIANAPOLIS -- "Something new is going on in American public travel," says Fritz Plous, director of communications, Corridor Capital LLC, speaking August 29 at the Indianapolis Forum on Passenger Rail.

The railroad's communications spokesperson understands how personal digital devices are getting people out of their cars. Plous represents the Chicago-based passenger train developer selected by the Indiana Department of Transportation (INDOT) this past June to manage and operate the Hoosier State train route between Indianapolis and Chicago. Working with Amtrak and INDOT, Corridor Capital expects many more Hoosiers to get off the roads and on the Hoosier State.

"We're dedicated to bring an entrepreneurial style to the railroad that hasn't seen much change in 33 years," he says. The model for the first public-private rail partnership in the nation includes cost containment leadership, upgraded passenger train equipment, improved passenger schedules, more train frequencies and seats, and a superior passenger experience, Corridor Capital explains in a new brochure made available to people attending the passenger rail forum held at the Metropolitan Indianapolis Board of Realtors.

Assuming funding issues are favorably resolved, rail development, finance, and management of the Hoosier State become Corridor Capital's responsibility on Feb-

ruary 1, 2015. Amtrak will continue to provide engineers and conductors for the 196-mile route, the company says.

French Lick, Noblesville Train Museums Offer Fall Events

By Donald Yehle

FRENCH LICK AND NOBLESVILLE -- Train excursions abound in Indiana during October, particularly if you'll be visiting Fishers and Noblesville on weekends—or French Lick on Tuesdays, Thursdays, Saturdays, or Sundays.

Indiana Railway Museum-French Lick

Scenic rides through the hills of Southern Indiana and through the Hoosier National Forest await visitors to the Indiana Railway Museum here. "Look for lakes, fields, waterfalls, and the state's second largest railroad tunnel," says Events Coordinator Phillip Gootte. The scenic train adventure lasts one hour and 45 minutes.

The trip goes through the Hoosier National Forest, past limestone rock cuts, and into the 2,200 foot Burton Tunnel, the second longest railroad tunnel in the state.

Open any day train rides are offered is French Lick's 1907 Monon Depot, which recently went through a major restoration, he said.

Other upcoming events:

October 18 and 19: Wild West Hold ups

Friday, Saturday and Sunday from November 7-

December 21: The Polar Express Train Ride

For more information on the French Link Scenic Railway go to www.frenchlinkscenicrailway.org or call them at 1-800-74-train.

Indiana Transportation Museum - Noblesville

On October 3 from 4:30 p.m. to 8 p.m., Noblesville and the Indiana Transportation Museum host "First Friday Caboose Rides" traveling the short distance between downtown Noblesville to Forest Park and back. Historic 1940's-era streamliners roll out of both Fishers and Noblesville to Arcadia every Saturday and Sunday throughout October. In addition to the "Hamilton Harvest Train" ride through Indiana's colorful fall countryside, passengers will be treated (*continued*)

("Train Museums" continued from page 4) to a pumpkin patch excursion, hayrides, and face painting on a Future Farmers of America-operated farm in Arcadia.

Each Saturday in October, Hoosiers can board "The Blue Arrow" for a five-hour evening rail dining experience along the Nickle Plate Railroad. Passengers can board the train in Fishers, Noblesville, or Forest Park and enjoy 90-minute dinner stops in Atlanta, Tipton, or Noblesville.

Chicago-Ft. Wayne-Columbus Service Studied

By Fred Lanahan

FT. WAYNE -- The Northeast Indiana Passenger Rail Association in partnership with the City of Fort Wayne and other Indiana cities and several cities in Ohio submitted a grant application on September 12, 2014 for \$3.2 million to the Federal Rail Administration for a Tier I Environmental Impact Study. The grant was generously reviewed and sponsored by the Indiana Department of Transportation (INDOT). If approved, this grant funding will be a big step toward restoring passenger rail service from Chicago to Fort Wayne and on to Columbus, Ohio.

On September 5, IPRA sent a letter to the Federal Railroad Administration supporting the Chicago-Columbus Corridor.

Commentary: Riding the Rails

By Phil Streby and Donald Yehle

Would you believe public transit receives \$39.5 billion in annual government subsidies while \$144 billion is paid out for driving? This is according to a National Surface Transportation Revenue Study. Externalities—like pollution, lost economic opportunities, and the need for U.S. troops in the Middle East—are included in a decade old National Defense Council figure of \$10.06 additional tax per gallon needed to cover these costs.

The Victoria (Canada) Transport Institute pegged the cost of externalities for driving at \$.54 per mile, it was reported. Corporate Average Fuel Economy (CAFÉ) standards in America do not consider externalities. Most lawmakers fail to acknowledge pollution, lost economic opportunities, and defense expenses when weighing the fairness of public transit budgets. If they did, American passenger rail would not struggle for meager Congressional awards in the massive transportation budget. Simply raising the gas tax by two cents—dedicating those transportation dollars to passenger rail -- would provide for intercity passenger rail operating expenses for a year. We can't argue about the success of passenger rail if we don't provide the means for that success.

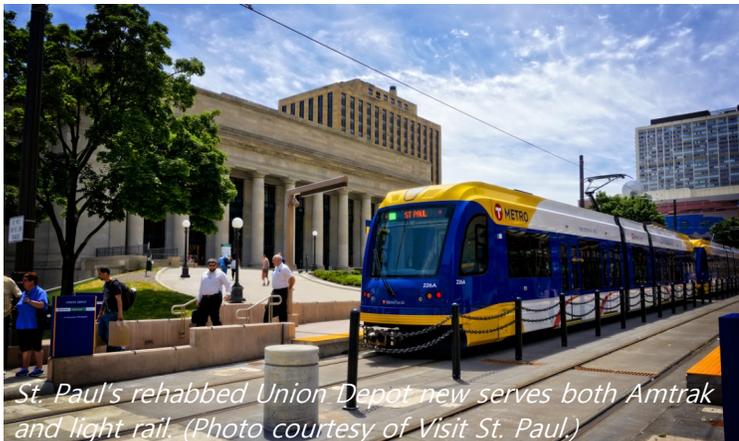


CN Grand Trunk Depot Spared Wrecking Ball

By Bill Malcolm

VALPARISO -- The Grand Trunk Railway of Canada built a line from Chicago to Valparaiso in 1880. The depot was constructed in 1912 and served continuously until CN vacated the building and slated its demolition. The Porter County Career and Tech Center, Indiana Landmarks, the City of Valparaiso School Board, and friends of the Porter County Career and Tech Education moved the Depot to the Career Center property and identified a new educational use for the building.

(Sources: City of Valpo posting, Mark Passine Vimeo.com.)



St. Paul's rehabbed Union Depot now serves both Amtrak and light rail. (Photo courtesy of Visit St. Paul.)

St. Paul Union Depot Re-Opens

Visit St. Paul provided the attached picture of their rehabilitated Union Depot, which now serves as the Amtrak station for the Twin Cities; in addition, the facility serves as a light rail hub for the new line that runs to Minneapolis.

Join IPRA Today—We Need Your Support

By Dennis Hodges

The Indiana Passenger Rail Alliance is out to establish that passenger rail needs to be an integral part of Indiana's transportation mix. To do this requires a large number of members and their fees.

The educating and marketing task of our Alliance is huge. If passenger rail is to become part of the transportation discussion, it needs men and women of all ages and backgrounds to make a difference in this state.

For any of our readers that are not members, the Alliance respectfully asks you to join us in our pursuit. This all goes to President Kennedy's famous line, "Ask not what your country can do for you, but ask what you can do for your country." Similarly, it is not a matter of how one can benefit from a membership, but how the Alliance can benefit from your participation.

As the Alliance is about to embark on some major educational and marketing projects, your voice, your dollars and your membership are vital to our success. Please consider becoming a member and then, visit our website, indianahighspeedrail.org to join this very important movement.

Coming in our November Edition:

- Update on Indianapolis' plans for the beleaguered Union Station and transportation center (Amtrak/ Greyhound Station)
- Amtrak's October 1 announcement regarding Union Station in Indianapolis and rail service changes
- Will Indy support the Hoosier State past January 2015? An update on Indiana's unique requirement that local communities fund 50% of passenger rail service
- Preview of possible state legislation next session impacting passenger rail service
- Amtrak's complaint against CN for rail delays
- The Midwest High Speed Rail / Badger Rails fall meeting in Milwaukee
- IPRA's views on the MI DOT's Great Lakes Rail draft EIS including where the new stop on the Detroit to Chicago train should be and which alternative is preferred

For More Information:

All Aboard Indiana a monthly publication of the Indiana Passenger Rail Alliance (formerly Indiana High Speed Rail Association).

To learn more or to join IPRA go to www.indianahighspeedrail.org

To follow rail news on Facebook go to Hoosiers for Passenger Rail and/or Hoosiers for the Hoosier State.

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